1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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272 places a handful of the thick paste in a calabash, and mixes it thoroughly with water. In the case of maize or pejivalles the thick skin is first squeezed out with the hands and thrown away.

INTOXICATING BEVERAGES

273 Bacchanalian orgies play an important part in the semireligious carousals and in the social life of the two tribes under consideration. Fortunately for themselves the Indians seldom have the means to buy spirits at the rum shops and their homemade drinks consume too much of their provisions to be indulged in frequently.

DISTILLING.—The Indians do not appear to have known how to distill, but before the arrival of the Europeans they knew how to get drunk on a number of fermented beverages. Aguardiente or rum (M.: *tahpla;* S.: *tapalni, tapalka,* lit.: "bitter") may be obtained by the Indians in the local shops. In Honduras and Nicaragua the manufacture of this spirit is a government monopoly, which is farmed out to contractors, generally political supporters of the party in power. There are many private illegal stills in the less accessible parts of these republics, which are operated chiefly by Ladinos. Levy (b: 300) states that the Ulwa of Rio Escondido distill an alcoholic liquor from cassava with the aid of an inform earthen still; the latter probably corresponds to the one depicted by Belt (233) from the neighborhood of Santo Domingo (Chontales) at the headwaters of Rio Escondido. I have met a similar simple apparatus among the Paya of Honduras. In these two cases, however, it served for the distilling of sugar-cane juice or brown sugar. Belt (233–234) describes such a "aly grog" manufactory as follows: "It consisted of two of the common earthenware pots of the country, one on the top of the other, the top one having had the bottom taken out and luted to the lower one with clay. This was put on a fire with the fermented liquor. The spirit condensed against the flat bottom of a tin dish that covered the top vessel, and into which cold water was poured, and fell in drops on to a board, that conducted it into a long wooden tube, from which it dropped directly into bottles."

FERMENTED DRINKS.—A great number of fermented drinks are prepared by these Indians. They are known locally by the general name mishla (M.: *misla;*[80] S.: *wasak*); distinctive names are, however, given

[80] This name (*michela, misklaw, muskelaw*) appears to have been formerly restricted by the Miskito of Cabo Gracias a Dios to a beverage prepared from ripe bananas or plantains, either boiled or roasted (Exquemelin, French ed.: II, 268; Dampier: I, 314; M. W.: 307). Lionel Wafer (A new Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of Panama, London, 1699, pp. 154–155) gives the name *mislaw* for an unfermented beverage prepared from ripe plantains. None of these seventeenth century authors mention the use of cassava for this purpose, although they list it among the food plants of the Miskito.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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to the beverages made from maize. They are all prepared on identical lines, the ingredients only differing in each case. These various drinks are stored in large earthenware vessels or in casks of foreign manufacture; the Miskito of the seventeenth century also used canoes for this purpose, as do the Paya of to-day (Dampier: I, 10). 273

(a) CASSAVA.—Among the Miskito and some of the Sumu the most important of these beverages is the one made from sweet cassava (*Manihot palmata* Muell.); its preparation does not differ essentially from that of *kava* or *kawa* among the Polynesians. The root is first peeled and cooked, then mashed or merely cut in small pieces, and finally thrown into a cask or a large earthenware vessel (M.: *sumi;* S.: *suba, sau suba*). Hot water is added and the whole is then covered with large leaves, the heat causing it to ferment. A small quantity of the root is chewed by the women, until thoroughly saturated with saliva, and then spat out again in the vessel in order to activate fermentation. The latter process may also be accelerated by the addition of sugar-cane juice and even by drum beating. From time to time the mass is stirred and skimmed with the aid of a paddle-shaped thin stick, for it effervesces like must. Fermentation will be complete in two or three days. The beverage looks much like buttermilk, but it is sourish in taste. Its toxic power is not very great, but the Indian consumes such a large quantity that he finally falls down on the ground, completely drunk.

(b) OTHER VEGETABLES AND FRUITS.—The above receipt may also be used with sweetpotatoes, yams, tania, or eddoe, and the fruits of the pejivalle plam and the breadnut tree.

The fruits of the cashew and other trees, as bananas and plantains, are merely bruised, with the addition of water, allowing the juice to take its own time to ferment. The most potent drink is the one prepared from roasted pineapples, which has been mentioned already during the second half of the seventeenth century by Dampier (I, 10) and M. W. (308). Sugar-cane juice may be added to these various beverages in order to augment their potency.

Pure fermented sugar-cane juice is extensively consumed in certain regions, especially by the Indians living on Rio Patuca. The juice is merely squeesed out with the aid of a simple hand mill, and fermentation may be assisted by adding to the liquid a small quantity of a leguminous vine (M.: *snak, snik;* S.: *sinak*), which bears small bean-like pods.

(c) MAIZE.—Among the Sumu maize (*Zea mays* L.) takes the place of cassava as the chief ingredient for the favorite alcoholic drink. The Sumu and the Miskito of the interior make a number of beverages from this grain. The most potent of them is called *puput* by the Twahka and Panamaka and *sili* by the Ulwa, but it is unknown to the Miskito; it is reserved for the great festivals, such as the *sau*

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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●273 and the *aeañ-lawwana*. Dry maize is ground on the metate, wrapped in large leaves after the manner of the "tamales" of the Ladinos, and thus cooked in boiling water. It is then kept for weeks or months over the smoke of the fire, whereby it becomes covered with a grayish mold, which ac[illegible] for its name (*puput* "gray").[405] A few days previous to the [illegible]tion of the feast the mass is taken out of the leaves, crumbled [illegible] cooked with a small quantity of water; it is then poured in a hole made in the ground over which a provisional shed has been erected. A thick layer of bijagua leaves or of balsa bark prevents the beverage from coming in contact with the ground. In two or three days fermentation will be completed and then the drink is ready for the palate. Before being served this potent liquor is strained and mixed with water.

Another intoxicating drink (T., P.: *mahkrus;* U.: *labapi tuhdey*) is made as follows: Either dry or green maize is ground on the stone, wrapped in leaves and boiled in water. Afterwards when this mass has cooled off a little, it is chewed by the women, and then left to ferment. From sprouted Indian corn a similar drink (M.: *aya urwan;* T.: *am wus;* P.: *ama wus;* U.: *am patañ*) is prepared, but it is not chewed nor wrapped in leaves. Among these Indians the latter drink is also sometimes known by the general Spanish name chicha (*sitsa*).

(d) PALM WINE.—Occasionally the sap from various species of palms, as the coyol (*Acrocomia vinifera* Oerst.) and the cohune or corozo (*Attalea cohune*), is left to ferment. The tree is felled and a concavity is cut into the stem, just below the crown of leaves. In about half an hour's time the sap will be found collecting in the hole, scarcely any of it running out at the butt, where the palm has been cut off. The sap may be taken fresh, but it is generally allowed to ferment, which process will be completed in two or three days. This "wine" is of a clear yellowish color.

(e) OTHER FERMENTED DRINKS.—Exquemelin (Engl. ed.: 251) gives the name *achioc* to the most common fermented beverage of the Miskito of the seventeenth century, which he describes as follows: "It was made from a palm seed, bruised, and afterwards steeped or infused in hot water, till it be settled at the bottom. This liquor being strained had a very pleasant taste, and is very nourishing." The seeds referred to are probably those of the oil palm from which a nonfermented drink is prepared to-day. (See Nonfermented Beverages.)

Levy (b: 300) states that the Ulwa of Rio Escondido also prepared fermented beverages from the tender annatto seeds and from

[405] Crévaux (Voyage dans l'Amérique du Sud, Paris, 1883, pp. 405–406) gives the receipt for a maize drink from the Guianas which is prepared on identical lines.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
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the pulp surrounding the wild cacao (*Theobroma bicolor* ?). This same writer (b: 308) likewise mentions a drink made from coconuts; it was sweetened by the addition of ripe plantains or wild honey. 273

GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

There is no trace of any division in clans or exogamic kinship groups. The tribal organization of these primitive tribes was essentially along democratic lines. 621

In former days the Miskito do not appear to have been ruled by a supreme chief, except during war time, when a commander was chosen by an assembly of the old men, in order to direct the military operations (M. W.: 307). The choice fell generally upon a warrior celebrated for his prowess. According to Exquemelin (French edit.: II, 264) preference was given to an Indian who had accompanied the buccaneers, but with the restoration of peace his authority ceased. 624

In the legends of the Miskito there are records of individuals seizing the powers of government by violence. The insignia peculiar to a chieftainship seemed to consist of a wooden scepter and of a metal breastplate depending from the neck. The powers of the numerous priest-doctors (*sukya*) were also very great, but it is not known just how much they intervened in governmental affairs. It appears, however, that occasionally the temporal and spiritual heads were both centered in the same person. 632 554

Hereditary chiefs did not rule the Mosquito Coast until after the establishment of British influence. One of these chiefs, a Miskito, was later raised to the rank of king; he became a tool in the hands of his foreign protectors, with whose aid his nominal authority was extended over the larger part of the coast. A silver crown and a scepter of little intrinsic value were bestowed upon him by the British authorities of Jamaica. The rule of the Miskito "king" was absolutely despotic. His orders were carried out by his quartermasters (*kwatmas*); the latter carried a cane or staff, which symbol of authority was apparently introduced by the English or Spaniards. A silver medal, sword, or anything else known to belong to the king would also do. Such a token established the credibility of the bearer and an immediate compliance with his orders. Foreign traders also applied to the king for such an object which served as a passport; every Indian was compelled to render him assistance, lodge him, sell him food, and furnish him with the means of continuing his journey, against reasonable pay. That the Indians of the interior did not pay much attention to such commands need hardly be told. 643 648

Besides the king, there were three other important rulers among the Miskito, who governed comparatively large areas and were known as "general," "governor," and "admiral." Numerous minor 624

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
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Harpoons with floats attached are used for large fish and for manatees, the latter being taken in the lagoons and at sea. Harpoons with long retrieving lines but without floats are used for sea turtles. The *Sumo* lasso young crocodiles.

Domesticated animals.—No early source mentions dogs, but they are now common. Pigs, sheep, goats, cattle, horses, and cats have been introduced. The people tame a great variety of wild birds and several species of mammals. The latter are even suckled by the women. Species of native bees are kept in hives near the houses.

Food preparation.—Food may be boiled, sometimes in coconut milk. Meat and fish are broiled or roasted in hot ashes, and fish may be fried in coconut oil. The *Paya* fry green pineapple. Salt is used as a condiment but rarely as a preservative. Sauces of red peppers, lime, and salt are made by the *Mosquito*. The *Paya* use chili as a sauce or as a substitute for other food. Tamales are made of manioc. Maize dough, sometimes soured (*Mosquito*), is wrapped in leaves and baked. This and manioc dough may be made into tortillas, an item introduced into the region only in recent years. Manioc is made into bread, which is baked in the open fire.

Numerous beverages are made of liana sap, maize, honey, green plantains, and the like. Some of these are made of a sour paste, which is diluted with water before it is eaten. Such food is usually carried while traveling. Alcoholic beverages are prepared in canoes (*Mosquito*) or log troughs (*Paya*) and stored in earthenware pots. Fermentation is hastened in various ways, notably by chewing uncooked or cooked maize or manioc and spitting it into the mixture.

Preserving and storage of food.—Fish is dried in the sun and meat is dried on a three-legged bohracot. The *Mosquito* make a mixture of green bananas and pejibaye palm nuts which may be kept for 6 months or longer. It can be made into a beverage or baked as bread. The *Sumo* preserve boiled maize by steeping it in lye to remove the hull and then burying it. The *Sumo* also make up large parcels of maize or peeled bananas, which are placed in running water until partially fermented, then dried in the sun. Live turtles are kept in stockades in shallow water.

VILLAGES AND HOUSES

Mosquito villages (pl. 35, *bottom*) had between 100 and 500 inhabitants. *Sumo* villages appear to have been much smaller. Formerly, communal houses, called "palenques," had compartments for each family. Some were about 40 by 80 feet (about 12.5 by 25 m.); smaller communal houses were built by the *Mosquito*. *Sumo* houses had an elaborately carved central post. House plans were rectangular, the ends being rounded, elliptical (*Paya*), or circular (*Mosquito* of Honduras). At the present

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
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is an elaboration of aboriginal customs, encouraged by the English. Early records indicate that the *Sumo*, *Paya*, and *Jicaque* developed similar but perhaps less complicated organizations in order to resist the Spanish Conquest. Probably they too had waged war previous to the 16th century, but available data do not permit identification of aboriginal customs.

Among the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* all men were potential warriors. They were arranged according to military ranks, which were distinguished by feather insignia. The warriors, particularly of the *Sumo*, were subject to severe tests including dietary restrictions, and they celebrated various ceremonies. Women were not permitted to attend these ceremonies, and the warriors were not supposed to have any relations with women. Before a battle shamans were consulted. The warriors, painted black, usually attacked the enemy at night. The *Mosquito* took prisoners to be sold as slaves to the Whites. The *Sumo* killed as many of the enemy as possible. They mutilated the corpses and wore the teeth and fingernails as trophies. Some of the *Sumo* reputedly ate the roasted flesh of their enemies in order to inflict further insult upon them and to make sure that they were completely destroyed.

ESTHETIC AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Dances and music.—All ceremonies are the time for much intoxication, dancing, and singing. On frequent occasions the *Mosquito* sing in groups or singly. There are many kinds of dances, some of them specially for women and others for particular ceremonies. There are two types of drums: a goblet-shaped drum used in funeral and memorial ceremonies and a drum of European origin which is used in some of the ceremonies and, perhaps, as a signal drum. Conch-shell trumpets and reed or bone flutes with one to four stops are blown. *Sumo* and *Mosquito* shamans use flutes 6 feet (2 m.) long. The musical bow, with or without a gourd sounding box, is played by women. Gourd rattles are also used.

RELIGION

The *Sumo*, *Mosquito*, and *Paya* believe in a deity, called "Our Father," who lives in the sky. He is little interested in mankind, is too far removed to be approached by humans, and has little influence upon human affairs. The sun, moon, and stars, especially the Pleiades, are considered to be supernatural beings. They figure in the mythology and are of some significance in the religious philosophy. Solar and lunar eclipses, thunder, wind, the rainbow, and other celestial phenomena are explained by myths. The last three are the agents of the major deities.

A *Sumo* creation myth recounts the activities of two brothers who made the animals out of maize cobs. People are believed to have been made from rays of the sun. The *Paya* believe that their god sowed men in the

3: Pijoan D-5 (ca. 1945) 1946
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252 Meat and fish are either boiled in water or roasted in hot ashes.
262 The favorite meats are red monkey and white lipped peccary. Birds eggs are eaten, even if partially rotten but the eggs of domestic fowls are seldom used. Bananas are cooked in many ways depending to a great extent on the degree of ripeness. Fish are wrapped in bajagua leaves and roasted or fried in coconut oil.

Vegetables such as cassava, sweet potatoes, tania, yaws, green bananas and plantains are either boiled in water or placed with the meat for roasting. The pith or "cabbage" or various palms are also cooked and eaten and other wild fruits are used raw when in season A sort of bread is made from time to time by grinding dry maize in a metate and adding water. The mixture is then wrapped in bijagua leaves and allowed to stand for several days during which time it ferments. It is then baked in embers.

A sort of ensilage called *bisbaya* is made by the Indians and consists chiefly of green bananas, plantains, and pejivales. These are peeled and buried in the ground, covered layer by layer with bijagua leaves and the ensilage is not uncovered until required for food. The fruit retains its whitish natural color and turns black only after exposure to air. These food supply units have been known to last for years. Bisbaya may be consumed as a beverage after being toiled with water or it may be baked in leaves as a sort or bread. The fruit of the pejivalle palm is treated in a similar manner.

252 Various species of pungent small wild peppers are used with food
263 as a seasoning. The peppers are mashed with lime juice and little salt to make a sauce which is stored in containers and used at meals to replace salt. Besides the use of peppersauce the ashes of burned palms are often used to replace salt and in fact have a high salty flavor. Vanilla is used to flavor a drink prepared from cacao and maize.

262 The eating of earth and charcoal (geophagia) is common among women and children and the exact physiological effect is unknown. Milk from domestic cows is common and is usually consumed as it sours or converted into a cheese.

The Indians are fond of foods that have soured or spoiled a little
[273] and often allow many decoctions to ferment; distilled liquors, however, are unknown.

221 *Seasonal intake of foods.* Meat, fish, fowl, cheese and milk are con-
262 sumed daily throughout the entire year but consumption of vegetables and fruits is seasonal.

January	*Aladi cati, Inupu cati:* bastard cedar flowering time. Citrus fruits in quantity, avocadoes, melons, nuts.